

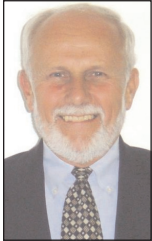


Community Letter

Spring 2008

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

In Memoriam Thomas Wazorko



Plainville Board of Education member, Thomas Wazorko, passed away on March 25.

A member of the Plainville School Board since 1984,

Tom served several terms as Chairman. He worked tirelessly over the years as an advocate for Plainville's educational needs. Tom's lifelong commitment to Plainville's youth and his exceptional service to the Plainville Board of Education has made a positive difference in the lives of fellow board members, faculty, staff, and students. His legacy will continue through the countless contributions that he has bestowed.

Message from the Board of Education

Across the state, municipalities are preparing their budgets for the upcoming year. In every community the result is the same. Education costs comprise the largest portion of municipal budgets. For residents who have been following this process over the years, little has changed.

In an edition of the *Plainville News* dated April 6, 1983, an article on a budget meeting featured a quote from (former) Board of Education Chairman Robert Stange stating, "If we don't speak up for the students and the parents then who the heck will?" The Town Council, which had requested the information, appeared sympathetic to the School Board's dilemma. "We realize it was a difficult job," said (former) Councilman Edgar Wynkoop. Stange concluded his comments with a criticism of the tax system: "The problem isn't with spending," he said. "It's with taxation." Stange called the state tax structure a "silly system."

Twenty-five years have passed and the result is the same. Every board of education works to control costs so that the tax dollars spent yield the best possible results. This Board has implemented many initiatives such as establishing regional purchasing agreements, creating in-house Facilities and Food Service Departments, and providing special education programs to keep Plainville students in Plainville schools. The Shared Services Committee of the Board and Town Council continues to look at ways to control costs and provide better services.

The solution to our dilemma does not exist in Plainville or any other town. The solution is at the State Capitol. Until residents of Plainville and every other community send that message to the Governor and the Legislature, we will continue to fight this no-win battle every year.

Student Spotlight: Plainville High School - United Way Youth Board Forum



Article by: Andrew Perbeck

Front row, left to right: Elizabeth Sisson, Kara Kolavage. Back row, left to right: Andrew Perbeck, Sarah Tanner, Taylor Perun

Over this past school year, the United Way Youth Board, a group of students from six central Connecticut high schools, has been collaborating with the United Way on how we can have a positive impact on other students. The Youth Board decided with all of the tragic recent deaths of teens related to driving, that a Reckless Driving Forum was a perfect fit. The Youth Board then figured out how to be the most effective and reach the most students in one night. We were able to get relatives of the victims of last summer's Bristol car accident, the parents of Alyssa Roy and relatives of the Gosslin family, to volunteer as speakers. There was also a police officer, paramedic, and the Commissioner of the Department of Motor Vehicles, each who had an important part in spreading the message.

The Forum took place in March at Bristol Eastern High School; we had a very good turnout with over 100 students and parents attending. This event makes Plainville High School a better place because there were a large number of our students who attended. They understood the message, and took it to heart. Dave Soltis, a senior in our school, said, "I am glad that I decided to attend this, even though I did not personally know the kids that have died, the message was still very effective. The parents' words were from the heart and you could tell they truly care about the message they are extending to us." This was a start to something that should be spread throughout all schools. The message that teens need to be less reckless on the roads and just drive slower is important.

The Long Range Plan

The Long Range Plan for the school district intends to improve the school buildings. There are a number of projects in progress.

HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION

Renovation of Plainville High School has been completed through Phase 7, which included work to science and art classrooms. The staff moved in on the weekend of March 8 and 9. Phase 8 demolition is well underway. This space includes Guidance Department offices. The Guidance Department staff has been moved into a temporary trailer through Phase 8. Work during the April vacation week included demolition and renovation in the Library Information Center. Coordination for the Phase 11 renovations to the kitchen, cafeteria, and administrative office space is underway. Meetings are scheduled for the coordination of building usage over the summer during the final phase of construction.

TOFFOLON SCHOOL RENOVATION

At the Toffolon School, the abatement of all flooring and pipe insulation is nearly complete. The demolition of the front two classrooms to make way for the library is complete. The foundations for the art and band room addition are nearly complete and the installation of the footings for the stage area adjacent to the gym is underway. Because bids came in lower than anticipated, the Building Committee recently accepted the change to allow for separate bus and parental drop off areas at the front of the school. This corrects a safety concern that the town had with the existing configuration. Phase 3 of the project will begin soon. This phase includes renovation of existing space and finishes. All of the Phase 3 contracts have been awarded to date. The first Phase 3 contractors meeting was held on March 12. Phase 5 was initiated to include the playscape.

Budget News

The Town Manager and Superintendent presented the budget to the Town Council on March 4. On March 6 there was a public hearing on the budget, followed by a Board of Education budget meeting with the Town Council on March 11 and another Town Council budget meeting on March 27. Ultimately, the Town Council voted to set the 2008-09 Board of Education budget of \$32,721,879--a 3.4% increase compared to 2007-08. This figure for the Board of Education budget represents an increase of \$1,075,958 compared to Fiscal Year 2007-08, but a decrease of \$1,234,500 compared to the 2008-09 budget that was approved by the Board of Education. At the Town Council meeting on March 27, a list of possible reduction items from the Board of Education was presented. There will be a public hearing on the budget on April 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Center. On April 29, the Town of Plainville will hold an all day budget vote for the registered voters of Plainville. This vote will begin the final steps of a

process that started many months ago. If town voters approve of the budget on the April 29 ballot, that approved amount will be the starting budget for the next fiscal year which begins on 7/1/08. If voters do not approve the budget, there will be up to two more votes on the budget and those additional voting days will be preceded by public hearings. Anyone can attend the public budget hearings and speak about the budget during the meeting. Some Connecticut towns have budget votes that continue until there is a "yes" from the majority of the voters. Plainville, on the other hand, provides the opportunity for voters to accept or reject the proposed budget up to three times, via the voting process. This structure allows residents to provide feedback on the budget to the Town Council, yet brings closure to the budget setting process in a timely manner. Once the budget amount is either approved by voter acceptance, or decided by the Town Council, the Council establishes a mill rate and brings closure to the annual budget setting process.

THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL NATIONAL OCEAN SCIENCES BOWL (NOSB) TEAM participated in the regional competition known as the Quahog Bowl, held at UCONN's Avery Point in Groton. The team placed 6th out of the 14 teams from Connecticut and Rhode Island, winning 3 out of 6 matches. Team members include co-captains **JEFF CIARCIA AND KIM LACHAPPELLE, BECKY REEVE, MARISSA JANDREAU, AND CAITLIN LEWIS...****LINDEN AND TOFFOLON FIRST GRADERS** celebrated the 100th day of school on February 12, with a parade featuring their 100th day projects...**PHS STUDENT-ATHLETE LEADERSHIP TEAM (S.A.L.T.) MEMBERS WHITLEY DOZIER AND ALYSE LAMARRE** presented a workshop on improving communication skills, and **TAYLOR PERUN AND QUINTIN WELLS** presented a workshop on decision making at the 2008 Elementary Level Student Leadership Training Conference held at Naugatuck Valley Community College. **S.A.L.T. MEMBERS MACKENZIE LITKE, MICHAEL THOMAS, SARAH DINDA, AND ALYSSA MARTINO** presented workshops at the Connecticut Association of Schools Middle School Leadership Training Conference held at Quinnipiac University in January...**SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS DR. KATHLEEN BINKOWSKI** has been selected to receive the prestigious *Outstanding Superintendent Award* from the Neag School of Education Alumni Society of the University of Connecticut. Dr. Binkowski will be recognized at the Tenth Annual Awards Dinner of the Neag School of Education in May...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND** participated in the Berklee High School Jazz Festival at the Berklee School of Music in Boston. The band had its strongest showing to date, placing 6th out of a group of 15 similarly sized schools. Lead trumpet **MARC LEVANDOWSKI** was selected to receive the *Judges Choice Award*. Other noteworthy student performances included the trombone section of **PATRICK HAGGERTY, JACLYN NEVEU, TYLER ADAMS AND SAM HAUSMAN**, who were featured in a ballad played by the band, as well as soloists **LAUREN DAVIS** on piano, and guitarist **ALEXANDER LECHEMINANT...****WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS** participated in a Math-A-Thon for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, raising more than \$5,800 to benefit the hospital in the ongoing fight against childhood catastrophic diseases...**PHS ALUMNUS AND NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE STAR NIKO KOUTOUIDES**, recently paid a visit to students at the Middle School of Plainville. Koutouvides spoke to sixth graders about the importance of trying their best on the Connecticut Mastery Tests...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR LUCY BROWN** has been honored for exemplary volunteer service with a *President's Volunteer Service Award*. The award was presented by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program on behalf of the President's Council on Service and Participation...**THE LINDEN STREET SCHOOL PTO** together with Linden faculty members **MELISSA PATTERSON, BARBARA FRIEDMAN, AND DR. JOHN SMAYDA** hosted the first "Get Movin' Night" at Linden. Families participated in a variety of activities including basketball free throws, dancing, art projects and more...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE** honored the contributions of African Americans to the United States with a Black History Month Celebration held in the George Ventrelli Auditorium. Guest speaker Lt. Colonel Robert Pernell, the highest ranking African American in the Connecticut National Guard, spoke about the contributions of African Americans to the United States military and students from the Middle School presented research and performed dance routines...**TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL LYNN LOGOYKE**, together with 4th and 5th graders **JENNA ARENS, EMMA BARTLEY, BRENDAN WEST, JONATHAN PLOURDE, ADRIAN KULAK, ADAM HUSHIN, SKY SCHEYD, SHYANNE BRADLEY, OLIVIA BURNS, MEKAELA FITHIAN-GIANTONIO, JACOB SAN JUAN, AND JOSHUA SCHILLING** attended the 16th Annual Environmental Awareness Conference for students in grades 4-6 at Wesleyan University. The program entitled, "It's Cool to Care" focused on providing students with an awareness of environmental issues as they relate to their lives...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS PATRICK HAGGERTY, DAN ZUCKERMAN, AND BRANDY GUARDA** attended a Rotary Club of Plainville meeting to provide an overview of the Rotary Club Youth Leadership Association Conference that they participated in at Springfield College courtesy of the Rotary Club of Plainville, who sponsored their attendance...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL DECA CHAPTER** competed in the Connecticut State Career Development Conference. **PHS DECA STUDENTS ERIC LUKE, TAYLOR PERUN, ELIZABETH SISSON, SARAH TANNER, LEIGHANN ASTOLFI, JESSICA JAHR, MATTHEW WILDE, ALANA MULLIN, PATRICIA JACEWICZ, NATALIA KONIECZKOWSKI, CHRISTINA CAVALLARO, AND MICHELLE SPINELLI** were state winners at the conference...**TOFFOLON FIFTH GRADERS AMY COUCH, MEKAELA FITHIAN-GIANTONIO, JONATHAN PLOURDE, AND LIANN HALL** presented mini documentaries about space at the Connecticut Educators Computer Association (CECA) K-12 Educational Technology Exposition at the State Legislative Office Building.

Adult Education

REGISTRATION REMAINS OPEN FOR THE FOLLOWING MANDATED PROGRAMS: Adult Basic Education, Adult High School Credit Diploma Program, Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language, GED Preparation, and PARC Adult Basic Education.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES BEGIN IN MAY: Beginning Sign Language, The New Retirement Mindscape, Beginner Guitar, Angels & Guides, Canoeing for Beginners, Intro. to Kayaking, Learn to See Auras, and Should I give My Home to My Children?

SUMMER SCHOOL will offer a variety of courses to secondary school students. Successful completion of the course(s) will provide the student with a grade and credit toward graduation. The Plainville Summer School is a self-sustaining program sponsored by Plainville Community Schools scheduled to run for 20 days, beginning June 30 until July 28.

PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE OF ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION 793-3209 TO REGISTER.

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Let's Chat With...Richard Carmelich, Business Manager



What are your responsibilities?

A School Business Manager has a wide range of responsibilities. Managing the budget is obviously a major responsibility. There are also many other facets of managing school functions. I work with the Facilities Director to make sure that the buildings are safe and running properly. I oversee the transportation and cafeteria functions of the district, and I work with the Technology Department to ensure that students and staff have access to the technology needed to be successful.

What is your top priority as Business Manager?

My first priority is to be a trusted resource for staff and community members and to provide services as safely and efficiently as possible. Specifically, my goals include better integrating technology to maximize workflow, working towards a stronger school/town partnership, and improving communication between the business office and the community. I am also working to identify areas where cost savings can be achieved.

What is your biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge is to continue to provide a high level of service with increasingly scarce resources. The ability of residents to fund education through property taxes is being outpaced by the costs of running a school district. For example, utility and health insurance costs will increase next year at rates far above inflation. Ultimately, this imbalance has required school administrators all over the state to examine how programs are offered or if some programs should continue to be offered at all.

PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:
Jesse Gnazzo
Anthony Goldberg
Lorri Goldsmith
Art Hoerle
Keith A. LaCombe
Patrick Ringrose
Becky Tyrrell
Barbara A. Willard

Belief Statements

We believe:

- that a quality school system is the core of our community and increases the quality of our lives
- in a safe, caring learning environment that respects individual difference and rejects discrimination of any form
- that optimal achievement for all learners is a responsibility shared by home, school and community
- that all students, faculty, staff, and parents are accountable to participate and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the district
- a high quality curriculum emphasizes the arts, literacy, and technology
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect